



## INDIANA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARD

To: Board Members  
Senior Staff

From: Joe Weaver, Chair  
Marie Theobald, Executive Director

Date: September 19, 2001

RE: UAS Onsite Visits

The Indiana Professional Standards Board has conducted two Unit Assessment System onsite visits: the University of Indianapolis in March and the University of Notre Dame in July. Based on our experiences with these two visits and a review of the history of the performance-based system for preparation and licensing, we make the following recommendations.

### **Recommendation 1: Cancel Unit Assessment System on site visits.**

**Rationale:** Since 1992, the IPSB has been developing a performance-based system for preparation and licensing. Various committees have been active in the development of that system. Since 1998, the Teacher Education Committee (TEC) has had the primary role in the development of the unit assessment system. Two consultants have assisted the committee in its work.

Over the past two years, the process for the development of the on-site review has become increasingly closed with only TEC members and the consultants developing the system. The only involvement of the full board has been in accepting minutes of the TEC. There have been no independent third party reviews nor has the process been through a pilot implementation. The first visit was high stakes. Thus, the following concerns:

1. **Validity and Reliability.** There is no indication that the consultants did validity and reliability studies nor was there independent review. Without an independent third party review, can we be assured of the validity of the rubric to meet the criteria? Are we actually measuring what we think we are? Can we be assured of the reliability of the process? Even though the team members are trained, can we assure that different teams would reach the same findings at an institution?
2. **Legal defensibility.** The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) conducts an annual independent audit of the processes by which certificate areas are developed. Although national board certification is a voluntary process, the board wants to be sure the process for developing certification areas is legally defensible if they are ever taken to court.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) held public hearings at national meetings before adopting the NCATE 2000 standards. The NCATE 2000 standards were piloted at volunteer institutions during the Spring 2001. Thus, the standards were developed over a five-year period with stakeholder involvement and input. The standards were piloted on a "hold harmless basis." A clear timeline for full implementation has been developed and communicated.

Although Indiana institutions have had five years to plan and implement the unit assessment system, the IPSB has not been consistent in the information that has been communicated or the feedback that institutions received. Based on the consultant who did the review, institutions have conflicting feedback on the status of their annual reports.

3. **Micromanagement.** At a time when the Governor is emphasizing less management from the state level and more flexibility with accountability at the local level, the IPSB is moving toward micromanaging the unit assessment systems of the 38 teacher preparation institutions. Past practice with NCATE and state-only team reports cite weaknesses without identifying specific ways to correct the weakness. Institutions are required to address weaknesses in their annual reports. Thus, they are held accountable for developing their own solutions and correcting the weakness. The team should not present solutions for the areas of concern in the UAS in either the exit interview or the written report.

The rubric that was developed by the consultants included a “clearly identified data manager” in order to be acceptable or target. When asked at the Indiana Board of Examiner training in Muncie in June, Donna Gollnick, Senior Vice President, replied that NCATE did not require a separate data manager in Standard 2.

4. **Alignment with NCATE.** The IPSB was the leader in the nation in the development of standards-based, performance-based teacher preparation and licensing. When NCATE started the process of developing output rather than input-based standards for accreditation, they looked to Indiana. In fact, NCATE Standard 2 (Assessment System and Unit Evaluation) is based on the IPSB assessment system.

In 1997, institutions began five years of planning for their unit assessment systems. Although the initial transition timeline adopted by the Board in September 1999 stated that institutions could submit their UAS as early as September 1, 1999, the IPSB was not ready to accept, evaluate, or approve those plans at that time. (The first UAS on-site visit occurred in March 2001.) Still, June 30, 2002 remained the deadline for submission and June 30, 2004 as the deadline for approval by the IPSB.

NCATE also developed a timeline for full implementation of the new standards. (See attached transition to full implementation slide handout.) The NCATE timeline indicates Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 as the semesters when the unit assessment system is being implemented, evaluated, and refined.

The June 2004 deadline for UAS approval and Fall 2004 date for full implementation of NCATE 2000 is a significant alignment. By Fall 2004, Indiana institutions will have had seven years for UAS development and refinement and should be on target to meet Standard 2 of NCATE 2000. Instead of dedicating resources to two separate team visits, institutions will be able to focus on their primary mission: preparing the best teachers who can affect student learning.

5. **Resources.** While not reducing the number of NCATE team visits, 36 UAS on-site visits are or will be scheduled between Fall 2001 and Spring 2004. (See attached accreditation visit schedule.) This does not include possible revisits. In some cases (St. Mary-of-the-Woods and Grace College), the NCATE team visit is scheduled one semester and the UAS visit the next. In the Fall 2002, NCATE and UAS visits are scheduled for the same institution (Indiana University Bloomington and Indiana University Kokomo) within weeks of each other.

Each UAS team consists of 5 or 6 members. Although the template for the site visit lists Sunday at 6:00 pm as the start time and 2:30 pm on Tuesday as the exit interview, in reality, the visit takes three days plus a pre-visit. Each team includes one IPSB staff member and one board observer. Staff and board members could be out on 9-14 NCATE or UAS visits in a semester. This is 18-28 workdays a semester out of the office or classroom.

In addition to human resources, fiscal resources must also be considered. The biennial budget has been cut seven percent for the agency and public higher education institutions. In terms of resources, both human and fiscal, can we afford to have a separate team visit for the UAS when it is also included in the NCATE standards?

**Recommendation 2: Continue to require institutions to submit a UAS by June 30, 2002.**

**Rationale:** Institutions have had five years to develop the UAS. By holding to the June 2002 deadline, we are still holding institutions accountable for the submission of a UAS. We will also have documentation of their progress in meeting NCATE Standard 2.

**Recommendation 3: Allow institutions that have submitted a UAS to submit applications for new programs.**

**Rationale:** The IPSB has had a moratorium on new programs since 1995. Since 1995, institutions were eligible to submit proposals for innovative and experimental programs at either the initial or advanced level. These proposals were based on the guidelines for experimental programs at both the initial and advanced levels.

The Board has already approved a New Program Approval Process. (See attached flow chart.) A new program is first granted candidacy status. During the NCATE/IPSB accreditation visit, programs in candidacy status are to be reviewed to determine if they go to regular status, continue on candidacy, or are eliminated. This is to assure that new programs are standards based, performance based, and aligned with the institution's unit assessment system.

Institutions would become eligible to submit new programs upon submission of a unit assessment system. With candidacy status, the approval process for both new programs and the Unit Assessment System would be integrated into the NCATE visit and accreditation timeline.

**Recommendation 4: Give the Teacher Education Committee (TEC) the charge to examine options for a one-day formative review of the UAS.**

**Rationale:** Institutions deserve feedback on their UAS. A formative review prior to the NCATE team visit would meet the intent of UAS review as originally proposed in 1995.

**Recommendation 5: Develop a process for Board approval of Unit Assessment Systems.**

**Rationale:** Institutions deserve to have formal approval of their UAS. This could be included with the NCATE accreditation recommendation or developed as a separate process that evolves from the formative review.